

embodiments shown and described in detail herein. Modifications coming within the spirit and scope of the following claims are to be considered part of the invention.

5           What is claimed as new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A system for supporting a film, said system comprising:
  - a first device having a first end and a second end, each of said ends having a diameter; and
    - a second device for rotatably receiving the film from the first device, said second device having a first end and a second end, and wherein each of said ends of said second device has a diameter; and
      - wherein said diameter of said first end of said second device is essentially the same as said diameter of said second end of said first device, and said diameter of said second end of said second device is essentially the same as said diameter of said first end of said first device.
  2. The system of claim 1, wherein said diameter of said first end of said second device is greater than said diameter of said second end of said second device.
  3. The system of claim 2, further comprising a cylindrical brake portion for frictionally contacting a brake gear to resist rotation of said first device.
  4. The system of claim 3, wherein said brake portion is located adjacent to said first end of said first device.
  5. An ink film supply system, comprising:
    - a supply core having a first cylindrical end and a second cylindrical end, each of said ends having an exterior diameter, and wherein said exterior diameter of said second cylindrical end is greater than said exterior diameter of said first cylindrical end;

a take-up core for taking up ink film from said supply core, said take-up core having a first end and a second end, and wherein each of said ends of said take-up core has an exterior diameter; and

5                   wherein said exterior diameter of said first end of said take-up core is essentially the same as said exterior diameter of said second end of said supply core, and said exterior diameter of said second end of said take-up core is essentially the same as said exterior diameter of said first end of said supply core.

10                 6. The system of claim 5, further comprising a molded brake portion for frictionally contacting a brake gear.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein said brake portion is located between a main portion of said supply core and said first end of said supply core.

15                 8. The system of claim 7, wherein said take-up core includes a molded gear for meshing with a drive gear, such that rotation of said drive gear causes said take-up core to take up the ink film from said supply core.

20                 9. The system of claim 8, wherein said second end of said take-up core is located between said molded gear and a main portion of said take-up core.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein said cores are formed of hollow molded plastic.

11. A method of handling an ink film, said method comprising the steps of:

locating first and second cylindrical ends of a supply core in respective support structures of a machine, while said ink film is wound around said supply core;

locating first and second cylindrical ends of a take-up core in respective support structures of said machine, while said ink film is attached to said take-up core; and

providing a cylindrical brake portion of said supply core in frictional contact with a brake gear of said machine, while said ink film is extended from said supply core to said take-up core.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of locating a cover over one or more of said ends of said cores.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said step of locating said cover occurs subsequent to said step of providing said cylindrical brake section in frictional contact with said brake gear.

20 14. The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of using a drive gear to rotate said take-up core, to thereby take up said ink film from said supply core.

25 15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of using said drive gear to generate tension in said ink film between said cores, and wherein said step of using said drive gear occurs while said brake gear resists rotation of said supply core.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said gears are used together and subsequent to said step of locating said cover over said one or more of said ends of said cores.